

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CPR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /068 W

-----101136Z 100134 /22

R 100401Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHC 7858

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0475

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP LA

SUBJECT: LPDR ATTACHE ASSIGNED TO EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

1. THOUANE VORASARN WILL BE GOING ON HIS FIRST OVER-SEAS ASSIGNMENT AS ATTACHE AT THE LAO EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, WHERE HE WILL BE NUMBER TWO IN A THREE MAN EMBASSY (THE THIRD BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE LEAST BEING THE "CHAUFFEUR"). HE IS AN AFFABLE BUT SERIOUS YOUNG MAN OF 28. EMBASSY LAO EMPLOYEE SUSPECTS THOUANE MAY BE AN ETHNIC VIETNAMESE BECAUSE OF HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND BECAUSE "THOUANE" IS A COMMON VIETNAMESE NAME. HE SPEAKS ARTICULATLY AND SELF-CONFIDENTLY IN LAO AND IS MORE COMFORTABLE WITH FRENCH THAN WITH HIS RUDIMENTARY ENGLISH. THOUANE MENTIONED TO EMBOFF THAT HE WAS EAGER TO IMPROVE HIS WEAK SPOKEN ENGLISH BY MAKING NEW AMERICAN FRIENDS. OBVIOUSLY THRILLED TO BE GOING TO THE U.S., HE ASKED EMBOFF A STRING OF QUESTIONS ABOUT WASHINGTON: IS IT GETTING WARMER?, ARE THERE A LOT OF CARS?, IS FOOD EXPENSIVE? HE HAS PREVIOUSLY TRAVELED ON A PLEASURE TRIP TO BANGKOK AND

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SAIGON BUT NOT OUTSIDE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THOUANE'S ONLY RESERVATION ABOUT HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT IS THAT HE MUST LEAVE HIS WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN IN LAOS.

2. THOUANE WAS BORN IN SAVANNAKHET WHERE HE GRADUATED FROM THE FRENCH LYCEE IN 1966. FROM 1966 TO THE PRESENT HE HAS LIVED IN VIENTIANE WHERE HE FIRST

ATTENDED THE LAW SCHOOL AND THEN FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS
WORKED IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
OF PROTOCOL. THOUANE'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES
IN PROTOCOL SOUNDED VERY MUCH LIKE THAT OF AN "ADVANCE
MAN" FOR VISITING FOREIGN DELEGATIONS BUT ALSO LIKE A "GSO"
FOR THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY WITH RESPONSIBILITIES FOR
DISTRIBUTING DIPLOMATIC LICENSE PLATES AND PROCESSING
DIPLOMATIC NOTES CONCERNING IMPORT AND EXPORT OF DUTY-FREE
SHIPMENTS. THOUANE FRANKLY SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HIS
DUTIES WOULD BE IN THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON BUT SUSPECTED
HE WOULD BE THE "WORKER" IN THE OPERATION.
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